

LIBERATION OR GANGSTERISM: FREEDOM OR SLAVERY

“Each generation must,
out of relative obscurity,
discover its mission-
and fulfill it or betray it.

- Frantz Fanon,
Wretched of the Earth



by Russell
Maroon Shoatz

About the Author

Russell Maroon Shoatz was a dedicated community activist and founding member of the Philadelphia-based Black Unity Counsel, which merged with the Black Panther Party in 1969. In 1970, Maroon, along with five comrades, was accused of an attack on a Philadelphia police station which resulted in the death of a cop. This attack was carried out in response to the war being waged against the Black Community. For eighteen months Maroon was active underground as a soldier in the Black Liberation Army until his arrest in 1972.

This freedom fighter escaped from prison twice, and in 1977 he remained at large for twenty-seven days before being re-captured. On March 2, 1980 he liberated himself once more, but was captured three days later. Maroon has been in prison, serving multiple life sentences, since that time. In addition to this text, he is the author of several other pieces, including "On the Black Liberation Struggle in Philadelphia," "Black Fighting Formations," "The Dragon and the Hydra: a Historical Study of Organizational Forms," and "The Real Resistance to Slavery in North America." Maroon is currently being held in Waynesburg, PA.

References And Books To Read

1. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon
2. *We Want Freedom*, Mumia Abu Jamal
3. *Assata*, Assata Shakur
4. *A Taste of Power*, Elaine Brown
5. *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*, Kathleen Cleaver, G. Katsiaficas, eds.
6. *Black Brothers Inc.: The Violent Rise and Fall of Philadelphia's Black Mafia*
7. *Monster: The Autobiography of an LA Gang Member*, Sanyika Shakur (from gangster into liberator).
8. *Dark Alliance*, Gary Webb (documents how the CIA introduced crack to the US)
9. *Lost History*, Robert Parry (an even more in-depth expose of the CIA and cocaine)
10. *Down by the River: Drugs, Money, Murder, and Family*, Charles Bowden (on the US and Mexican governments' partnership with the drug cartels)
11. The Inspector General's first and final reports on Iran Contra and the Illegal Drug Trade, CIA Official website. (US government's admissions about its dealing drugs).
12. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an era of Economic Integration*, Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, & Noland J. Malone (on Mexico's economy, drug smuggling, and the DEA's identification of its infrastructure-that has never been acted upon).

2. In what ways can we help the Next Wave avoid our mistakes?
3. What can we do to contribute to documenting who the real big dogs behind the drug trade are?
4. Why have they never been held accountable?
5. How come our families and communities have been the only ones to suffer?
6. How can we overcome our brainwashing?
7. How can we truly gain respect and dignity?
8. In what ways can we atone for our wrongs and redeem ourselves, families, and communities?
9. What are some ways to fight for restitution and reparations for all those harmed by the government-imposed under-cover drug tax?
10. How can we overturn the “13th Amendment” to the U.S Constitution and finally abolish legal slavery in the U.S.?¹

Once you have answered those questions and begun to move to materialize your conclusions, you will have made the choice between liberation or gangsterism: freedom or slavery.

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by Russell Maroon Shoatz

¹ The 13th amendment, which is credited with “abolishing” slavery, actually reads “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*, shall exist within the United States...” In doing so, the amendment directly forecasts and legally enables the rise of the prison-industrial complex, particularly in the South, as a way to continue the exploitation of Black labor.

“Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission—fulfill it or betray it.”
-*Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon

Within two generations the youth of this country have come full circle. Starting off in 1955, youth were being driven by two major motivations: One, the acquisition of enough education or apprenticeships, the use of their unskilled labor or street-smarts to land “good” jobs or establish hustles, in order to make as much money and obtain as many material trappings as possible. Two, to use the education, apprenticeships, unskilled labor, street-smarts jobs, hustles, and the material trappings provided by them to win a measure of respect and dignity from their peers and society in general, while at the same time learning to respect themselves as individuals of worth, not simply eating, sleeping, working, and having sex.

The First Wave: 1955-c.1980

The Civil Rights Movement in the South successfully motivated Black, Puerto Rican, Euro-American, Native American, Chicano, Mexicano, Indigenous, and Asian youth to use their time, energies, creativity, and imaginations to discover their true self-worth and earn the respect of the world, while struggling toward broader goals not measured by material possessions. Over time, each segment cheered on, supported, and worked in solidarity

the Jamaican and Caribbean diaspora were also a consequence of the degeneration of its lower classes’ attempts to throw off the economic and social effects of its former slavery and colonial oppression. Led by the socialist Michael Manley and inspired by the revolutionary music of Bob Nester Marley (which can be glimpsed in the later Steven Segal *Marked for Death* and DMX/Nas *Belly* movies), the Jamaican posses were the Black Mafia on steroids! Moreover, their quasi-religious nationalism, coupled with their ability to operate nationally and in the Caribbean, as well as their heavily armed soldiers—their ten thousand or so—were nothing compared to the hundreds of thousands in the wings in the Black and Brown communities!

The cry from the big dogs’ mouthpieces in Congress was about the gunplay, not so much the drugs. What was not mentioned, however, was the big dogs’ anxieties about stopping these gunslingers before they got over their mental blocks about using their weapons against the police, or the system. Stop them while they’re hung up on imitating their Hollywood and Euro-Mafia icons who made a mantra out of instructing their gunmen not to use their weapons against the police. Indeed, with a few exceptions, The Second Wave allowed themselves to be disarmed and carted off to prison like pussycats!

Add to that the unforeseen windfall of thousands of new jobs for the rural communities (hence the Prison Industrial Complex and its neo-slavery) that were being destroyed economically by capitalism’s globalization, drive which benefited the conservative segments of the US that the big dogs needed to appease in order to continue enjoying their fanatical support.

It is therefore necessary to struggle against the short-sighted ideas about racism alone as the driving motive that fueled the construction of the Prison Industrial Complex. If you follow up with your own research, you will be able to document the who, when, where and how the big dogs set everything in motion, as well as how they continue to use us as pawns in their giant international con game.

Conclusion

Ask yourself the following questions:

1: How can we salvage anything from how the First and Second Waves allowed their search for respect and dignity to degenerate into gangsterism?

of the Black gangs getting deep into the crack trade, clearly illustrates my point about evolving into proto-cartels, and alternately being triaged before maturing into real strategic threats, leaving the crack trade intact.

Enter the “Prison Industrial Complex,” whose purpose was to neutralize the Second Wave before they woke up to the fact that despite their money and power they were being used:

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played for suckers. A rub that the more astute big dogs feared money would not soothe. Thus, all of the draconian gun-related and mandatory sentencing laws were first formulated on the federal level, where most of the big dogs have their power,

and then forced upon most of the states. This was to insure that the Second Wave would never be able to consolidate any real power. Precisely because the latter were proving themselves to be such ruthless gangstas, in imitation of their Hollywood idols, coupled with the potential power derived from their share of the undercover tax being extracted from their communities: Triage them every time they get too big, which averaged from one to three years in a run; then everything acquired was taken. The Hip Hop martyred icon The Notorious B.I.G. put it all together in his classic song—appropriately entitled “Respect”:

“Put the drugs on the shelf! Nah, I couldn’t see it/
Scarface, King of New York/ I wanna be it ... Until I got
incarcerated / kinda scary ... not able to move behind the
steel gate / Time to contemplate/ Damn, where did I fail?
/ All the money I stacked was all the money for bail.”
“Biggie Smalls,” *New York Times*, 1994. Toure, supra.

Let’s get another thing straight. Take the angle that continues to have shortsighted individuals chasing ghosts about why powder cocaine and crack are treated so differently. Within the big dogs’ calculations, there was no reason to harshly punish the powder cocaine dealers and users in the same manner as they were doing with the crack crowd. And racism was not the driving motive: it was rather the armed threat within these proto-cartels. The big dogs witnessed a clear example of what was to come by way of the Jamaican Posses that cropped up in the Black communities at the same time. These young men from

with all the others, discovering their common interests and closely-linked missions with a broader peoples’ goals.

In this way, Black youth elevated the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power and Black Liberation Movements. Puerto Rican youth energized their elders’ historic struggle to win independence for their homelands, Euro-American outh attacked the lies, hypocrisy, and oppression that their elders were training them in within the schools, society, and armed services.

Native American youth were returning to their ancestral ways, fighting to regain land stolen from their people. Asian youth were struggling to overcome a system and culture that used and abused them. Indeed, all of them came to see clearly that neither education, jobs, money, hustles, nor material trappings could, by themselves, win them the victories they needed, or the new type of dignity and respect that they deserved.

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Moreover, from 1955 until c.1975, these youth had joined, formulated, led, and supported struggles worldwide against racial oppression and bigotry, colonialism, and the oppression of women and youth. In the process, they were winning themselves the respect, admiration, and gratitude of the world’s oppressed, as well as of their peers. In addition to becoming people that societies had to take seriously, they were positive contributors who had much to give, and who were willing to sacrifice to achieve goals. They were youth capable of imagining a better world and fighting to realize it, while at the same time remaining young in spirit and enjoying a good time. All in all, they earned themselves a well-deserved place in history.

From the Mountain to the Sewer

Yet here we are 30 years later and we find youth despised rather than respected. They have been stripped of that hard-earned freedom, self-respect, and dignity. They are being told—as in the past—that the way to regain it is to “acquire education, skills, good jobs, or the right hustles.” This means, once again, to acquire as much money and material goods as possible in order to win respect and dignity from one’s peers and society,

thereby to start loving oneself and see oneself as more than an eating, sleeping, working, sexual animal.

How the hell did we get back to 1955?!

First off, let me make clear that even with all the glorious strides the youth made within the First Wave, they were not the only ones fighting for radical and in many cases revolutionary changes. In fact, they were more often only the tip of the spear. They were the shock troops of a global struggle, motivated by youthful energy and impatience, with no time or temperament for elaborate theories. They were rushing forward into the fray, hardly prepared for the tricks that would eventually overwhelm them. To understand what happened to the youth movement, we need to examine some of the tricks that were used to slow down, misdirect, control, and defeat them. Without a point, a spear loses its advantage!

Strategic Tricks Used Against Youth of the First Wave

Understanding these tricks in their various guises and refinements is the key to everything. You will not understand what happened to get us to this point, or be able to move forward, until you recognize and devise ways to defeat these strategies. They were and remain:

1. Co-option
2. Glamorization of Gangsterism
3. Separation from the Most Advanced (politically revolutionary) Elements
4. Indoctrination in Reliance on Passive Approaches
5. Raw Fear

Co-option was used extensively to trick just about all of the First Wave youth into believing that they had won the war. Strategically, amongst every named segment of youth, from university students to lower class communities, billions of dollars and resources were made available. This was purportedly to allow the youth to determine what should be done to carry out far-reaching changes, but all along they were being monitored by “experts” who subtly coaxed them farther and farther away from their own most radical and advanced elements. This was done mainly through control of the largesse, which ultimately was part of the ruling classes’ foundations and government and corporate strategies for defeating the youth with sugar-coated bullets.

In time, consequently, substantial segments of these

and consumption rungs of the ladder, the Black and Brown communities were becoming major headaches, ones that if left unchecked could evolve into a real strategic threat! Yes, crack had turned their lower class neighborhoods into lucrative mainstays of the big dogs’ alternative taxing scheme.

The urgency, however, was graphically driven home in comparisons with the non-Black/Brown communities’ consumption of more (mostly powder) cocaine. Yet the trade in the Black and Brown hoods and barrios was accompanied by an exponentially unforeseen rate of ever more sophisticated drug-related violence, especially as the gangs got seriously involved.

As I’ve pointed out, the gangs were mainly just pursuing respect, prior to getting involved with hustling drugs. And carnage connected to that was not a real concern to the big dogs. But this was different

from the earlier dumping of heroin in those communities which was accompanied by the comparatively isolated violence of the Black Mafia-style groups. That violence, though terrifying, was also more selective. The more widespread availability of crack and assault weapons

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led the big dogs to understand that if they did not aggressively deal with the ultra-violent inner city drug gangs, the latter would eventually move to consolidate their gains by forming South American and Mexican-style cartels. Afterwards, like their Mexican forerunners, they could gradually take over the inner city politics, threatening to become less predictable (once they realized that the money and power would not of themselves provide them with the kind of respect and dignity they sought). To understand why not, just observe the rich and famous hip hop artists who continue to wild-out because they still lack the respect and dignity that comes with struggling for something other than money or power. In short, some type of political or higher cause.

In any case, the Hip Hop generational favorite TV drama *The Wire* lays out the entire phenomenon pretty much like it had played itself out in reality in Baltimore and other urban areas. In fact, the TV fictional series derives its realness from a long-running expose featured in a Baltimore newspaper. Another after-the-fact but still

useful piece of work to study. That show, depicting earlier years

century.

Sadly though, our First Wave's degeneration into the glamorization of gangsterism, the Second Wave's hunger for respect and recognition that was fueling the senseless gang carnage, the Hip Hop generation's ability to provide the youth with vicarious fantasies to indulge their senses with the hypnotic allure of the temporary power that the drug game could bring them-led the youth in the United States back to emulating the First Wave's *Superfly* and *Scarface* days. Others also see that:

"My theory is that nine times out of ten, if there's a depression, more a social depression than anything, it brings out the best art in Black people. The best example is Reagan and Bush gave us the best years of hip hop ... 'Hip hop is created thanks to the conditions that crack set: easy money but a lot of work, the violence involved, the stories it produced-crack helped birth hip hop. Now, I'm part conspiracy theorist because you can't develop something that dangerous and it not be planned. I don't think crack happened by accident ... Crack offered a lot of money to the inner-city youth who didn't have to go to college. Which enabled them to become businessmen. It also turned us into marksmen. It also turned us comatose."

Ahmir Thompson, aka Quest love. *The Believer*, 2003, Toure, supra.

With the deft moves of a conjurer, the big dogs in the US seized upon all this and began to nudge these elements around on the international chessboard-within their giant con game. Moreover, these big dogs in the United States had very little choice where to start their triage in order to gain some relief from the manufactured domestic crisis. I'll tell you why. Cocaine in its powder and crack forms is very addictive, and the addictive ambience of the cultures that use them regularly-the rich and famous, the Hollywood set, corporate executives, lawyers, doctors, weekenders, entertainers, athletes, college kids, suburbanites, hoodrats, hustlers, pipers, etc.-guarantees demand!

In many ways, it may be argued, this was the same as alcohol and tobacco in the Prohibition days-which have never been suppressed in the US for long. It follows, despite all the propaganda of "Just Say No" and the bogus War on Drugs, that the big dogs never intended to eradicate the use of cocaine. However, on the lower end of the US distribution

previously rebellious youth found themselves fully absorbed and neutralized either by directly joining, or accepting assistance from, the foundations, sub-groups, corporations, university facilities, or "approved" community groups, or by becoming full-fledged junior partners after winning control of thousands of previously out-of-reach political offices and appointments.

For all intents and purposes, that same trick is being used today.

Glamorization of Gangsterism, however, was then and continues to be the most harmful trick played against the lower class segments. The males in particular were then, and continue to be, the most susceptible to this gambit, especially when used opposite prolonged exposure to raw fear!

Let me illustrate by way of two historic groups that presently enjoy nothing less than "icon" status among just about everyone aware of them. Yet the documented histories of these two groups clearly show how that trick is played, and continues to be played, throughout this country. Following is a brief but clear history of how the original Black Panther Party was bludgeoned and intimidated to the point where its key leader(s) consciously steered the group into accepting the Glamorization of Gangsterism. Because this was a lesser threat to the ruling classes' interests, it won the Black Panthers a temporary respite from the Raw Fear leveled against them by those circles. In the process, the organization was totally destroyed. The Nation of Islam-connected Black Mafia had a different background, but the same two tricks were played against them. Left in its wake was a sordid tale of young Black men who were again turned from their goal to be Liberators into becoming ruthless oppressors of their own communities. Never once did they engage their real enemies and oppressors: the ruling class.

Hands down, the original Black Panther Party (BPP) won more attention, acclaim, respect, support, and sympathy than any other youth groups of their time. At the same time, they provoked more fear and concern in ruling class circles than any other domestic group since Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower presided over the neutralizing of the working class and the US wing of the Communist Party. They were even more feared than the much larger Civil Rights Movement. According to the head of the FBI, the Panthers were the "greatest threat to the internal security of the country." Albeit that threat came from their (BPP) ability to inspire other youth-both in the US and globally-to act in similar grassroots political revolutionary ways.

Thus there were separate BPP-"style" formations among the Native Americans- the American Indian Movement; the Puerto Ricans -the Young Lords; the Chicano Mexicano Indigenous -the Brown Berets; the Asians -I Wor Kuen; the Euro-Americans- the Young Patriot Party and White Panther Party. Even the elderly - the Gray Panthers. Also there were literally hundreds of similar though lesser-known groups!

Internationally, in addition, the BPP had an arm in Algeria that the only official "embassy" established for all the other Afrikan, Asian, and South American revolutionary groups seeking refuge in that (then) revolutionary country. Separate Black Panther Parties were spawned as well in India, the Bahamas, Nova Scotia, Australia and Occupied Palestine/State of Israel.

The Nation of Islam, although it had been in existence since 1930, experienced a huge upsurge in membership during

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this period, mainly due to the charismatic personality of :Malcolm X and his aggressive recruitment techniques. His influence continued after his assassination, fueled by the overall rebellious spirits of youth looking for leadership in their fight against the System.

There is a mountain of documents to show that the highest powers in this country classified both the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam as Class A Threats. They wanted to either neutralize or destroy these two groups, no doubt considering that if that could be achieved, similar methods could undermine the power of youth in the rest of the country.

How did the ruling powers of the US go about the destruction of the Black Panthers, the Nation of Islam, and finally, the entire youth movement? Against the BPP they used a combination of co-option, glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, indoctrination in a reliance on passive approaches, and raw fear: every trick in the book.

The ruling class's governmental, intelligence, legal, and academic sources-alarmed at the growth and boldness of the BPP and related groups, as well as its ability to win a level of global support-devised a strategy to split the BPP and coopt its more compliant elements. At the same time they moved to annihilate its more radical and revolutionary remainders. They knew that they had the advantage, due to the youth and inexperience of the

the United States, a major part of the proceeds would be pumped into the Mexican economy in order to forestall the looming bankruptcy.

Consequently by the middle 1990s the Mexican underworld had established the super powerful Gulf, Juarez, Guadalajara, Sinola, and Tijuana Cartels. Moreover, they had consolidated their power by not only controlling who were elected to key political posts in Mexico, but had also perfected the art of bribing key local, state, and regional police heads, as well as strategic generals in Mexico's armed forces. Check out the movies *Traffic*, the Antonio Banderas/Selma Hayek *Desperado* and *Once Upon a Time In Mexico*, and again-after the fact-you'll see Hollywood making money by spilling the beans. But you should not let the stunt work lull you into thinking there's no substance to the plots!

Remember: Mexico's Cartels would not be able to function without the collaboration and protection from the highest levels within the US establishment. Just as the CIA has openly admitted it was a drug merchant during an earlier period, you can believe nothing has changed-except partners!

The hilarious part is that none of the wannabe real gangstas in the US know that in reality they're low-level CIA flunkies; or they can't wait until they get out of prison to become undercover government agents ... slinging crack.

Furthermore, if one does not get beyond the idea that this whole thing was just a plot to destroy the Black and Brown peoples-a favorite though shortsighted theory-there's no way to see just how deep the rabbit hole really is. I repeat: The main objective was to pump billions of dollars into the Mexican economy in order to avoid a complete meltdown and the subsequent fleeing to the US of sixty (60) or more million Mexicans, out of its (then) ninety plus (90+) million inhabitants. A crisis that would have dwarfed the numbers just beginning now to make their presence known.

Actually, the big dogs in the US probably didn't know just how they were going to control the fallout that would inevitably accompany their cocaine/crack tax. They routinely tax alcohol, gambling (from the lotteries to the casinos) and even prostitution in certain areas, don't they? So yeah, it was a clandestine operation to use cocaine to rescue Mexico and stave off an economically induced invasion of the US by its destitute populace. The Mexican people, especially its indigenous populations, were made poverty-stricken by five-hundred years of colonialism, slavery, peonage, neocolonialism, and the theft of one-third of their country by the United States in the 19th

could not keep prevailing upon the IMF and WB to lend them money—especially since they saw another way to temporarily plug up the hole in their control of matters in the international finance world.

Thus another unholy alliance was formed. This one was between the US government, CIA, State Department, banks, and the other usual suspects on one side; Their Mexican counterparts—including their first fledgling cartels—on the other, with the South Americans now in a junior partnership role. However, I don't want to give the impression that it was arranged diplomatically, all neat and tidy. Far from it! Rather it evolved through visionaries among the usual suspects, putting their ideas before other select insiders and working to craft an unwritten consensus. It was the same way that they—along with Cuban exiles in Florida—had used the earlier cocaine trade to fuel the growth around Miami. Only this time it would be Mexico—a much more pressing and unstable situation.

But it was recognized by all parties that Mexico's underworld would eventually land in the driver's seat, due to their ability to take the kind of risks called for, their geographical proximity to the US border, and most importantly, their strong desire to avoid confronting the US and Mexican governments—like Pablo Escobar had done. They were more than willing to guarantee that most of their drug profits would be pumped back into the moribund Mexican economy through large building projects, upgrading the tourist industry, fanning, and other clearly national ventures. And on the messy side, their gunmen were becoming experts at making reluctant parties fall into line by offering them the choice between gold and lead.

Nonetheless you would be mistaken to think that the Mexican and South American underworld ever became anything but hired hands of the big dog in the United States government and their partners in the banking industry who always remained in a position to destroy their smuggling and money-laundering operations through a much tighter control of the U.S. borders—or by making it extremely difficult to launder the mountains of small denomination bills they had to deal with. In fact, the then President George Bush, Sr. ordered the invasion of Panama—which was/is a major offshore bank laundering hub—after their hired hand General Manuel Noriega had become unruly in 1989.

Furthermore, these hired hands would insure that the chosen corrupt politicians would always garner more votes in Mexico's elections, by bringing in plane loads of money that the South American gangsters and government/ military partners would make available as their overhead. But more important for

BPP. They had their own deep well of resources and experience in using counter-insurgency techniques much earlier against:

Marcus Garvey's UNIA (United Negro Improvement Association),
The Palmer Raids against Euro-Americans of an Anarchist and/ or left Socialist bent
The crushing of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) and neutralizing of other syndicalists
The underground work that led to the defeat of Germany and Italy
The subsequent destruction of any real Communist power in Western Europe,
The total domination and subjugation of the Caribbean (except Cuba), Central and South America—except for the fledgling guerrilla movements
Everything they had learned in their wars to replace the European colonial powers in Africa and Asia.

Still, the BPP had highly motivated cadre, imbued with a fearlessness little known amongst domestic groups. The ruling class and their hench-men were stretched thin, especially since the Vietnamese, Laotians, and Kampuchans were kicking their ass in Southeast Asia, and the freedom fighters in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola also had their European allies—whom the U.S. supplied with the latest military hardware—on the run. So, despite their inexperience, it was still a mixed bag: they had a *fighting chance*. The co-option depended on their *neutralizing* the BPP co-founder and by then icon, Huey P. Newton. Afterwards, they used him—along with other methods—to *split* the BPP and lead his wing along reformist lines. In the process, the still revolutionary wing was *forced* into an all-out armed fight before they were ready, hoping either to kill, jail, exile, or break their will to resist and send them into ineffective hiding-out. Furthermore, despite the BPP's extraordinary stature globally, no country seemed willing to risk US wrath by openly allowing the BPP to train guerrilla units—something they could have circumvented in time.

So Huey, surprisingly, was allowed to leave jail with a still-to-be-tried-murder-of-a-policeman-charge pending. Thus the government and courts had him on a short leash, and with that, the hope of controlling his actions, although probably not through any direct agreements. Sadly, the still politically naive BPP cadre and other youth who looked up to Newton imagined that they—the people—had forced his release. Veterans from those

times still cling to such tripe!

Yet it seems Newton thought otherwise, and since he was not prepared to go underground and join his fledgling Black Liberation Army (BLA), he almost immediately began following a reformist script. This was completely at odds with his own earlier theories and writings, as well as at odds with basic principles that were being practiced to good effect by oppressed people throughout the world. Even further, he used his almost complete control of the BPP Central Committee to expel many, many veterans and combat-tested BP cadre in an imitation of the Stalinist and Euro-gangster posture he would later become famous for. This included an all-out shooting war to repress any BPP members who would not accept his independently derived reformist policies.

At the same time, on a parallel track, U.S. and local police and intelligence agencies were using their now infamous COINTELPRO operations to provoke the split between Huey's dominant wing and other less compliant BPP members. This finally reached a head in 1971, after Huey's shooting war and purge.

Even more telling, it was later learned that Newton's expensive penthouse apartment—where he and other Central Committee members handled any number of sensitive BPP issues, was under ongoing surveillance by intelligence agents who had another apartment down the hall. Thus, Newton and his faction were encapsulated, leaving them unable to follow anything but government sanctioned scripts; unless he/they went underground. This occurred only when Newton fled to Cuba after his gangster antics threatened the revoking of his release on the pending legal matters the government held over his head.

In addition, the glamorization of gangsterism was something that various ruling class elements had begun to champion and direct towards the Black lower classes in particular. This was especially after they saw how much attention the Black Arts Movement was able to generate. Indeed, they recognized that it could be used to misdirect youthful militancy while remaining hugely profitable. They had in fact already misdirected Euro-American and other youth with the *James Bond*, *I Spy*, *Secret Agent Man* and other replacements for the “Old West/ Cowboy and Indians” racist crap, so why not a “Black” counterpart? Thus was born of the enormously successful counterinsurgency genre collectively known as the Blacksploitation movies: *Shaft*, *Superfly*, *Foxy Brown*, *Black Caesar* and the like, accompanied by the wannabe crossovers

Noriega, Escobar, and the Medellin Cartel and made Oliver North do some community service, but that's all. The real crime lords—the government, military, CIA, and banking dons— all got away. Albeit after Congresswoman Maxine Waters made a stink about it, the CIA was forced to do two investigations and posted on their official website their findings and admissions of being drug dealers.

Naw dog, ya'll were all played! Face it.

That's what happened to you O.G.s from the 80s. But like Morpheus said in *The Matrix*, let me “show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.”

Gradually the US Government was forced to crack down on the cocaine coming through Florida, but by then the South American Cartels and their governments and military allies had found new routes through Mexico. At first the Mexican underworld were just middlemen; but quickly recognizing

a golden opportunity, they essentially seized control of most of the cocaine trade between South America and the United States, forcing the South Americans into becoming junior partners who were responsible for the

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cheaper growing and processing, after which the Mexicans would purchase mountains of cocaine for the trans-shipment overland and the smuggling into the US and its wholesale markets that produced oil and automotive industry-type profits.

One would wonder how and why the South Americans—powerful players—would go for a deal like that. As ever, the answers can be found among the Machiavellian and serpentine maneuverings of the United States government, and their poor Mexican counterparts. You see, in the 1980s, the Mexican government was overseeing an economy that was so bad that for all practical purposes they could have gone, or did go belly-up: bankrupt. Indeed, the US and their underlings within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were forced to periodically give them millions upon millions in loans in return for further unfair trading concessions, in order to save them. Note that the United States was then and remains today extremely vulnerable to Mexico, because common sense and past experience told them that the worse things became in Mexico the more destitute their already dirt-poor majority would become, forcing them to find a way to get into the US in order to find means to feed themselves and their families. And the US

Fishburn, and Above the Law with Steven Segal, you have to search hard to see it portrayed so clearly. Later I'll explain why.

In any case, most people have heard that crack was dumped into South Central Los Angeles in the mid-80s-along with an arsenal of military-style assault rifles that would make a First Wave BPP member ashamed of how poorly equipped s/he was. Needless to say, the huge profits from the crack sales-coupled with everyone being strapped-magnified the body count. And since crack was also so easy to manufacture locally, and so dirt cheap, just about anybody in the hood could get into the business. Gone were the old days of a few big-time hustlers, except on the wholesale level. But make no mistake, the wholesale cocaine sold for the production of crack was fully controlled and distributed by selected CIA-controlled operatives.

So for all of your around the was dogs bragging about how big you were/ are, an organizational flow chart would look something like this:

At the top would be the President, Ronald Reagan,
Vice President and former CIA Director George
Bush Sr.
National Security Advisor
Secretary of State
major banking executives
Colonel Oliver North
General Secord
arms dealers
mercenary pilots
South and Central American government and military
leaders, including Escobar and the Medellin Cartel
originally;
US Navy and Coast Guard officers, Customs and
Border Patrol officers,
Justice Department attorneys,
State and local police and county sheriffs and deputies,
and their successors in office, and
at the bottom of the barrel: you dog!

Now I know that you already knew in your hearts that there were some big dawgs over you, but I bet you never imagined the game came straight out of the White House, or that you were straight-up pawns on the board. If that sounds too wild, then tell me why it's harder to find any government, CIA, military, or banker-like George Bush, Sr. and his crew-in prison, than it is to win the lottery? Yeah, they double-crossed

like *Starsky and Hutch*, with the notorious Black snitch Huggie Bear. Psychological warfare!

Follow the psychology: You can be "Black," cool, rebellious, dangerous, rich, have respect, women, cars, fine clothes, jewelry, an expensive home, and even stay high-just as long as you don't fight the system - or the cops! But if you don't go along with that script, get ready to go back to the early days-with its shoot-outs with the cops, going to the graveyard, prison, on the run and exile! But you can still be cool, even as a Huggie Bear style snitch, and interestingly, like his buddy, the post-modern day / futuristic rat Cipher of *The Matrix*, who tried to betray ZION in return for a fake life as a rich, steak-eating movie star. And most importantly: no more fighting with the OAgents! Get it?

Furthermore, to bolster the government's assault, and to saddle the oppressed with a Trojan Horse that would strategically handicap them for decades to come, they began to flood our neighborhoods with heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and "meth." Yes, all those drugs had earlier been introduced into these areas by organized criminals-under local police and political protection.

Now the intelligence agencies were using them in the same manner that alcohol had long ago been introduced to the Native Americans.

Now the intelligence agencies were using them in the same manner that alcohol had long ago been introduced to the Native Americans-and with the same intentions-and the later "foreign" trafficking in opium by the ruling classes of Europe and this country: to counter their propensity to rebel against outside control while profiting off their misery.

Newton began to indulge in drugs as a way to relieve the stress of all that he was facing. He became a drug addict, plain and simple. That, however, didn't upset the newly constructed gangster-cool that Hollywood, the ruling class, and the government were pushing. Although many BPP cadre and other outsiders were very nervous about it, Newton's control "was by then too firmly fixed for anyone to challenge.

At the same time, the reformist wing of the BPP did manage to make some noteworthy strides under its only female head, Elaine Brown. Newton's drug addiction/ gangster-lifestyle-provoked exile caused him-on his own and without any consultation with the body-to "appoint" Elaine to head the Party in his absence. An exceptionally gifted woman, she relied on an inner circle of female BPP cadre, backed up by male enforcers,

to introduce some clear and consistent projects that helped the BPP to become a real power locally. It was a reformist paradigm, though, that could not hope to achieve any of the radical revolutionary changes called for earlier. In fact, within Newton's earlier writings he had put the cadre on notice of a point in time when the above-ground would have to be supported by an underground, in order to keep moving forward. Yet it was Newton who completely rejected that paradigm upon being released from jail, although he still organized and controlled a heavily armed extortion arm called "The Squad," which consisted of BPP cadre who terrorized Oakland's underworld with a belt-operated machine gun mounted on a truck bed, accompanied by cadre who were ready for war! In classic Euro-gangster fashion, Newton had turned to preying on segments of the community that he had earlier vowed to liberate.

Consequently, we can see all of the government's props bearing fruit: Newton's faction of the BPP had limited itself to both legally- and underworld-sanctioned methods: "Co-option" and "Indoctrination in Reliance on Passive Approaches"—passive towards the status quo. They fell for the trick of severing all relations with those who would lead the BPP if they got to the next level of struggle: "Separation From the Most Advanced Elements." Through Newton's control, his faction was immersed in the "Glamorization of Gangsterism." Finally, Newton, his faction, and activists from all the other American radical and revolutionary groups succumbed to the terror and Raw Fear that was being leveled on them, all except those who waged armed struggle, were killed, jailed, exiled, or forced into hiding, or into continuing their activism under the radar.

Epilogue On Huey P. Newton And His BPP Faction

Elaine Brown both guided their faction to support Newton and his family in exile, and orchestrated the building up of enough political muscle in Oakland to assure Newton's return on favorable terms. Thus he did return and eventually the charges were dropped. Newton continued to use his iconic stature and renewed direct control of his faction to again play the cool-political gangster role; and like any drug addict who refuses to reform, he kept sliding downhill, even turning on old comrades and his main champion, Elaine Brown, who had to flee in fear.

Sadly, for all practical purposes, that was the end of the original Black Panther Party. Checkmate! Later, as is well known, Newton's continued drug addiction cost him his life, a

communities, the ruling class henchmen had no desire to do anything but keep their Gestapo-like police heavily armed and fully supported, since technology had made what they dubbed the underclass obsolete anyway. (See Sean Penn and Robert Duval's movie *Colors*.)

Peep The Game

The South American cocaine trade replaced the French Connection and CIA-controlled US distribution of Southeast-Asian Golden-Triangle-grown and processed heroin as the drug of choice in the early 1980s. Remember *Miami Vice*? Well, as usual, this country's government, intelligence agencies, and large banks immediately began a struggle to control this new cocaine trade. Remember: control-not get rid of, as their lying propaganda projects such as the War-on-Drugs hype claimed! Thus they were contending mainly with South American governments, militaries, and large landowners who controlled the raising, processing, and shipping of the cocaine, although for a few years the latter had to also do battle with a few independent local drug lords, most notably the notorious Pablo Escobar-Ochoa family-dominated Medellin Cartel.

Within this country, nevertheless, the youth gangs had next to nothing to do with the early cocaine trade, which was then primarily servicing a middle and upper-class white clientele. It had a few old school big-time hustlers along with some Spanish-speaking wholesalers, who also had their own crews to handle matters. Although after the fact the Hip Hop cult movie favorites *Scarface* and *New Tack City* are good descriptions of that period. Albeit they both purposely left out the dominant role that the u.s. government and intelligence agencies played in controlling things. Alright, I know you're down with all that, and love it! So let's move on.

In the middle 1980s the US began backing a secret war designed to overthrow the revolutionary Sandinista government that had fought a long and bloody civil war to rid Nicaragua of its US sponsored dictator Somoza in 1979. But after being exposed to the world, the US Congress forbade then President Ronald Reagan from continuing his secret war. Like a lot of US presidents, he ignored Congress and had the CIA raise millions, recruit mercenaries, buy or steal military equipment, and continue the war. That is how and why crack came upon us, with all the mayhem it has caused. But here you won't see Hollywood and TV giving that up the raw. With few exceptions, such as Black director Bill Duke's *Deep Cover*, starring Laurence

An example: if you respect your body, you can also love your body, and you would not dare destroy it with drugs or alcohol. But if you don't respect your body, and you go on to destroy it in that fashion, it follows that you have no love for it either.

So the bangin' raged on for years, piling up as many deaths and injuries as the US suffered during the Vietnam War—each elevating either the attackers' or the victims' stature in the eyes of their peers. As usual, during those early years, the overseers of the oppressive system bemoaned the carnage while locking up untold numbers of bangers for a few years, but overall did absolutely nothing to arrest the problem.

Now here's where it gets really interesting. Drugs, as noted, had been flooding into these same communities since the 1960s. Back then, however, it was mainly heroin, with marijuana and meth playing relatively minor roles. Remember the movies *Serpico* and *The French Connection* exposing that? But the early gangs, to their credit, never got deeply involved in that. They saw dope fiends as weak, and although they would blow some sherm or chronic, it was just a pass-time activity for them. They were serious about bangin'!

Consequently, the bangers were all co-opted, wedded as they were to their form of fratricidal gangsterism and totally separated from the remnants of The First Wave—whom they knew next to nothing about. And the “good kids” were being indoctrinated in passive, legal, get-a-good-education approaches. All the while, both groups were scared to death of the police! Despite the bangers' hate and contempt, any two cops could lay a dozen of them out on all fours-at will.

This accounts for Tupac's later iconic stature among them; he walked his talk:

“.. the fact that while everyone else talks about it, Tupac is the only known rapper who has actually shot a police officer; the walking away from being shot five times with no permanent damage and walking away from the hospital the next day and then rolling into court for a brief but dramatic wheelchair-bound courtroom appearance—it's been dangerously compelling and ecstatically brilliant.”
“Tupac,” *The Village Voice*, 1995, Toure, supra.

But something was on the horizon that was about to cause a seismic shift in this already sorry state of affairs. It was to alter things in ways that most still cannot or will not believe. Apparently, since this madness was contained in the lower class

sorry ending for a once great man.

The “Original” Black Mafia (BM)

“When you grow up in situations like me and Cliff.. there is a lot of respect for brothers like (drug lord) Alpo and Nicky Bames, those major hustler-player cats. Cause they made it. They made it against society's laws. They were the Kings of their own domain.”

*Cliff Evans, *Rolling Stone* 2000, in *Never drank the Kool-Aid: The Ivy League Counterfeiter*, Toure.

Albeit a touchy matter to many, it's irrefutable that the original Black Mafia (BM) was first established in Philadelphia, PA, in the late 1960s, and has seen its cancerous ideas duplicated, imitated, and lionized by Black youth ever since.

And while it's unclear how much the national Nation of Islam (NOI) leadership knew or learned about the BM, there's no question of the local NOI's eventual absorption of the BM—under Minister Jeremiah X Pugh. In fact, although the BM was originally just local “stick-up kids” culled from neighborhood gangs, their being swallowed by the NOI would eventually turn them into a truly powerful and terrifying criminal enterprise—completely divorced from everything that the NOI had stood for since its founding in 1930.

Most of the high level tricks were also used by the government and intelligence agencies against the areas they came from: the same tricks of Co-option, Glamorization of Gangsterism, Separation from the most Advanced Elements, and Raw Fear.

Thus it must be understood that although the NOI and BPP had different ideologies and styles, both still held out the promise to most Black youth of helping them obtain what they desired: self-respect, dignity, and freedom.

The puritanical NOI's dealings with the founders of the BM were similar to that of the Catholic Church's historical relationship with the Italian Mafia. BM members who attended NOI religious services did so on a similar basis—bringing the attention of the local NOI leadership to their unusually good financial contributions. Within the lower class Black community being served, everybody knew that meant that they were hustlers, stick-up kids, or both. Just as the Italian Mafia would contribute huge sums to the Catholic Church, the BM eventually did the same within Philly's Temple No. 12. The national NOI, however, had been under close scrutiny and surveillance by

intelligence agencies for decades. In fact, by the time of his death, the NOI's founder—the Honorable Elijah Muhammad—had in excess of one million pages of files within the archives of the FBI alone. So anyone who still believes that the assassination of Malcolm X did not have a US government hand involved, fails to understand the threat the NOI presented to this country at that time. Consequently, the BM's financial contributors would come to the attention of the intelligence agencies through their monitoring. But over-shadowing all the above was the bloody assault the FBI and local police were leveling against other Black radical and revolutionary groups 'such as local and national BPP chapters and branches, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and scores of smaller formations.

As a matter of fact, FBI agents at first tried to recruit Minister Pugh as a snitch against the local BPP, telling him that the BPP was out to get him and supplant the local NOI as competition for the Black youth's loyalties. Pugh, to his credit, didn't take the bait, and also managed to avoid getting his Temple No. 12 involved in a war with the BPP. Doubtless he suspected that his taking blood money from the BM had also come to the attention of the FBI, and he was therefore vulnerable. Around the same time, Pugh's name was miraculously removed from the FBI's Security Index, which contained all the country's top-level threats. After Pugh's name being on this list for years, and right after they had filed a report of his refusal to be a snitch, why would they relax the pressure? How did they think it would unfold? Giving Pugh and his Temple, along with their BM followers, enough rope to hang themselves? or to become addicted to a game that was ultimately controlled by their professed enemies—the US Government and its underlings. This would turn the tables on Pugh and force him to be less radical, more compliant, and no longer a threat on the level of the BPP, RAM, & Co.

For the BM members, the glamorization of gangsterism fit right in. After all, why would a group of Black stick-up kids and gang members call themselves The Black Mafia? This was in the era of "Black is Beautiful," when millions of Blacks began wearing Afros/Bushes, and African clothing, adopting African names—completely at odds with the aping of Italians! Why not call themselves the Zulus, Watusis, or Mau Mau—as younger street gangs were doing? No! Hollywood's projection of gangsterism was having its effect.

Consequently, within a couple of years, the Black Mafia would be uniformly recognized as an expensively-dressed, big-hat-wearing, Cadillac-driving imitation of the Italian Mafia. And

piling up around them comes from the pursuit of respect and dignity.

This is how 50 cent put it:

"Niggas out there sellin' drugs is after what I got from rappin' ... club and the bouncers stop doin' whatever the fuck they doing to let you in and say everybody else wait. He special. That's the same shit they do when you start killin' niggas in you hood. This is what we been after the whole time. Just the wrong route. "
50 cent, Rolling Stone, 2003, in *Never drank the Kool Aid: The Life of a Hunted man*, Toure.

Admittedly, at times that simple but raw truth is so intertwined with many other things that it's hard to grasp. Particularly nowadays, the drug game and the git-money games; and most sets do provide a sort of alternative family. They also provide a strong cohesion that is mistakenly called love. To cut through the distractions, I'll illustrate my point:

When the Second Wave was left hanging by the defeated and demoralized First Wave, they unknowingly reverted to methods of seeking dignity and respect that the First Wave had elevated itself above during their struggle for radical and revolutionary change. This was a period when gang wars/ gang banging was anathema! The revolutionary psychiatrist Frantz Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth* notes that the colonized and oppressed are quick to grab their knife against a neighbor or stranger, thereby in a subconscious way *ducking their fear of directing their pent-up rage at those responsible for their suffering: their colonial oppressors*.

In this way, the notable early sets like the Bloods, Crips, and Gangster Disciples' primary activity was banging, or gang warring over "turf": neighborhoods, schools, etc, as well as over real or imagined slights. But the real underlying motivation was all of the parties' desires to build their reputations and earn stripes, meaning to gain prestige in the eyes of fellow bangers. This translated into respect among their peers. Moreover, it caused these youth to bond with each other like soldiers do in combat; a bonding like a family, even moreso. Not surprisingly, many outsiders decreed that that bonding was love, and some of the youth would parrot that thought. To exchange love, however, you first have to love yourself, and the gang banger by definition has no love for him- or herself. In fact, s/he is desperately seeking respect, without which any idea of love being present is self-deceiving.

Little as it's understood, moreover, they are in fact the lower class counterpart of the youth clubs, associations, Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts, fraternities and sororities of the middle and upper classes. The key difference is in the higher level of positive adult input in the middle and upper class groups. Hip Hop is just the latest manifestation of artistic genius bursting forth from these lower class youth seeking respect and dignity.

Alas, Hip Hop culture is daily succumbing to co-option in ways so obvious as to need no explanation. But woe to us if we don't come to grips with how The Second Wave's gangs have been co-opted. This is an ongoing tragedy that, if not turned around, will ultimately make the shortcomings of The First Wave pale in comparison.

Certainly the gangs have comprised a sub-culture that has historically been a thorn in the side of the ruling class. It had to be either controlled and used, or eradicated. Usually that was accomplished by co-option and attrition, with older elements moving on, or being jailed long enough to destroy the group. Our First Wave, as noted above, was able to outflank the ruling class to some extent by absorbing key elements which lent them prestige among the rank and file and its acceptance of radical and revolutionary ideas, but was pimped by BM style groups.

It is fascinatingly simple to follow how the Second Wave has been tricked and continues to be bamboozled into destroying itself. Just about all the pillars upholding this giant confidence game are familiar to everyone—through movies, TV, street culture, and/ or personal experience with friends, family, associates, cops, courts, jails, and prisons, not to mention death or our own unfulfilled yearnings for respect and dignity.

Gangstas, Wankstas, And Wannabes

All of the above—more than anything—crave respect and dignity. Forget all the uninformed ideas about the homies wanting the families, fathers, and love they never had. That plays a part, but if you think that the homie only need some more hugs, then you've drunk the kool-aid! Actually, even if you did have a good father, a loving family / extended family, if everything in society is geared toward lessening your self-worth because of your youth, race, taste in dress, music, speech, lack of material trappings, etc, then you will hunger for respect—which will lead to you knowing dignity within yourself. Even suburban, middle-, and upper-class youth confront this to a lesser degree. No! All the beefin', flossin', frontin', set-trippin', violence, and bodies

they turned countless numbers of street gang members, former RAM cadre, and militants from dozens of other Philly groups who were fighting oppression, into pawns for the use of further destroying their own communities.

The third aspect of the trick of “separating them from their more advanced elements” operated under cover of Pugh and other insiders who continued to preach Black Nationalist doctrine among the youth in the street gangs, and within the prisons, not missing an opportunity to perpetuate the illusion that in this way they could gain pride and respect. They believed they were joining a rebel group that was only waiting for the right time to throw its lot in with the masses of Blacks who were waging nonviolent and otherwise bloody battles from coast to coast, and on the Afrikan continent.

By tricking them into diverting their energies into gangsterism, Pugh & Co. were effectively separating them from the more advanced elements, albeit many, if not most, bought into the rationale that their extortion and drug-dealing proceeds were a tax that would be used to build The Nation. A few years later, that would be dubbed “drinking the kool-aid,” in a reference to Jim Jones and his CIA handlers tricking and forcing hundreds of other Blacks to “drink” their death.

Finally, the raw fear being leveled on the entire society had its most devastating effect on them (the BM) as well. How else to explain hundreds-if not thousands—of BM street soldiers fearless enough to cow Philly's long-established and ruthless Italian Mafia and its other mobs, and most of its warring street gangs and independents—that same Black Mafia that had fielded headhunters who literally terrorized the city by decapitations—how else to explain their lackluster showing when it came to confronting anyone in uniform?

I'll tell you how. Their leadership had completely disarmed their fighting spirits by telling them not to resist the police until they gave the order- which never came. Ironically, after the police and FBI had succeeded in suppressing, jailing, exiling, and co-opting most of the BPP, BLA, RAM, and others, they discovered the BM and in turn attacked them with a vengeance, while none of the BM put up anything resembling real resistance, only to go on the lam. Minister Jeremiah made a 180-degree tum, even turning snitch after getting caught in a drug sting.

The legacy of the BM, therefore, is one of a ruthless group of Black thugs who spawned similarly ruthless crews—notably Philly's Junior Black Mafia (IBM) and the latest clone, Atlanta's Black Mafia Family. But its most harmful effect comes

from their deeds and mystique that returned a huge segment of Black youth to the belief that the only way to gain respect and dignity was to be the best, most heartless hustler around: full circle from 1955.

Finally, I have used the BPP/BLA and NOI/BM because they present the most well-documented examples. Although both are surrounded by much mythology, a true analysis has hardly been attempted, except by government and intelligence sources. The latter use their findings to refine, update, and revise older tricks in order to continue to check and control the country's rebellious youth, while at the same time persisting in the oppression of the communities they occupy-in line with the ruling class's agenda.

Concurrently, idealistic middle and upper-class youth (from all segments of the First Wave) allowed themselves with few exceptions to be co-opted as the new managers of the very system they had once vowed to radically change. They became champions of passive resistance, the doctrine of total reliance on passive and legal methods, epitomized by their new hero, Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Second Wave: C. 1980-2005

“Orthodox hip hoppers speak of a holy trinity of hip hop fathers: Herc, Afrika Bambaata, and Grandmaster Flash. But like moisture in the air before it rains, the conditions were ripe for hip hop before the holy trinity began spinning. Hip Hop’s prefathers or grandfathers are James Brown, Huey Newton, Muhammad Ali, Richard Pryor, Malcolm X, Bob Marley, Bruce Lee, and certain celebrity drug dealers and pimps whose names won’t be mentioned here ...” Toure. *Never drank the Kool-Aid.*

“Ronald Reagan and crack were Hip Hop’s 80’s anti-fathers; both helped foster the intense poverty and the teenage drug-dealing millionaires as well as the urge to rebel against the system that appeared to be moving in for the kill, to finally crush Black America.” (ibid.)

By 1980, therefore, for all practical purposes, the youth from the First Wave had been defeated. Collectively they descended into a debilitating, agonizing, escapist period characterized by partying. Not to discount the fringe elements who had been so adversely affected that they had their hands full trying to rebuild their sanity, their family, to go back to school, or surviving in exile or prison-while others seemed to be

dancing on the ceiling. This was similar to shell-shocked vets of World War I and World War II and the victims of post-traumatic stress syndrome from the Vietnam War.

But the most misunderstood victims were the children of that generation: The Second Wave, from 1980 to 2005. Those who reached puberty or became young adults during those years were, paradoxically, in the dark about what had occurred in the recent past. They became victims of the propagandist machinery of the “reformed” yet rotten-to-the-core ruling class-dominated schools and social institutions.

Among all lower and working class segments of the youth, therefore, Coolio’s Gangster’s Paradise applied. These were children raised by the state in uncaring schools or juvenile detention centers and homes, in front of TV sets, movies, video arcades, or in the streets. Within the greatly expanded middle classes-notably among people of color-youth were back to the gospel of getting a good education and a good job. That became their highest calling, interspersed with an originally more conscientious element who tackled politics and academia as a continuation of the First Wave’s struggle. Upper class youth, however, followed in the footsteps of their ruling class parents, seeing that radical and revolutionary changes had failed to alter the country much.

As in a recurring nightmare, the Second Wave youth fell victim to co-option, the glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, relying on passive methods, and the raw fear of an upgraded police state.

As in a recurring nightmare, the Second Wave youth fell victim to co-option, the glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, relying on passive methods, and the raw fear of an upgraded police state. Left to their own devices, lower class youth began a search for respect and dignity by devising their own institutions and culture, which came to be dominated by the gangs and Hip Hop. On their own, these could be used for good or bad. But lacking knowledge of the experience of the First Wave, the new generation would be tricked just as their parents had been.

Gangs are working- and lower-class phenomena that date from the early beginnings of this country, being in evidence also overseas. In fact, many of those who first joined The First Wave were themselves gang members, notably Alprentice Bunchy Carter, head of the notorious Slausons (forerunners of today’s Crips) and the martyred founder of the Los Angeles Panthers.